Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Tobacco Warehouse
(Henderson's Wharf)
1000-1001 Fell Street
Baltimore (Independent City)
Maryland

HAER No. MD-51

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
MID-ATLANTIC REGION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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Location:	1000-1001 Fell Street Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland
Date of Construction:	1897
Present Owner:	Gaylord Brooks Investment Company P.O. Box 400 Paper Mill Road Phoenix, Maryland 21131
Present Use:	Presently vacant; used as warehouse for various commodities until 1976
Significance:	The B & O Railroad Tobacco Warehouse was a collection point for southern tidewater tobacco. Before being shipped to European markets, tobacco was graded, sorted and packed into hogshead barrels in the warehouse. The six-story structure has dimensions of approximately 205'x285'. Exterior walls are load-bearing brick; interior supports are yellow pine columns.
Project Information:	Mitigative documentation was prepared by the Gaylord Brooks Investment Company in 1981, in accordance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
Transmitted by:	Jean P. Yearby, HAER, 1985

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Tobacco Warehouse at Henderson's Wharf is located in the Fells Point neighborhood of Baltimore. Fells Point is an eighteenth-century residential neighborhood which has much of its original architecture and town plan intact. Begun as a harbor settlement, the area's growth has been directly related to the growth of Baltimore harbor. The industrial and commercial activities of the waterfront supported residential development of Fells Point.

The district suffered a decline after World War II. In recent years, the neighborhood has been threatened by the development of Interstate 83. Fells Point still serves an important port function as the base for towing companies, ship chandlers and barges. The demands of modern port facilities, however, have outgrown Fells Point's piers and warehouses. Warehouse operations have diminished significantly with the advent of container cargo practices and large port facilities in Dindalk and Locust Point.

History and Recent Use

Henderson's Wharf was originally known as O'Donnel's Wharf. In 1850, it was purchased by James A. (John) Henderson, a Fells Point merchant with an interest in shipping. The wharf was used for launching steamships, such as The Somerset, which was launched in 1865. That tradition continued through 1929, with the launching and operation of Lykos Lines at Henderson's Wharf. In the meantime, Mr. Henderson sold the wharf to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

The B & O Tobacco Warehouse, constructed on Henderson's Wharf, was completed in 1897. The building's original function was a collection point for southern tidewater region tobacco. Tobacco was collected on coastal schooners and steamers and brought to Baltimore where it was graded, sorted and packed into hogshead barrels in the building, ultimately being shipped to the European tobacco market.

The architect of Henderson's Wharf (as the tobacco warehouse came to be known) was E. Francis Baldwin (1831-1916). Mr. Baldwin began his practice with the firm of Niernsee and Neilson, and designed much of his work with Jonas Pennington. Examples of Mr. Baldwin's architectural expertise can be found throughout Baltimore.

For thirty years, the building was used as a warehouse for storing tobacco. For ten more years, Kelly-Springfield rented the warehouse to store automobile tires. Subsequent to Kelly-Springfield, the warehouse was used to store foreign cars, glass and whiskey bottles until 1976. It has stood vacant since that time.

Building Description

The existing building is six stories high, five-sided, with dimensions of approximately 205' x 285'. The existing gross area of the building is 312,000 square feet. Exterior bearing walls are solid brick, ranging in thickness from 26" at the ground floor to 12" at the sixth floor. Exterior walls are penetrated by flat-arched openings, covered with hinged metal-clad wood shutters. Exterior openings were never glazed, as ventilation was a requirement for tobacco storage.

Interior structure consists of yellow pine columns, 16' ± on center in a north-south direction and 17' ± on center in an east-west direction. Columns vary from 15" square on the first floor to 8" square at the sixth. Columns support 12" x 20" yellow pine girders which run in an east-west direction, which in turn support 3" x 11" yellow pine joists, 16" on center. Bearing walls and columns are supported on concrete pile caps and wood piles. Floor to floor heights are 12' for floors two through five, and ceiling height varies from 14' to 18' on the sixth floor.

The building is separated into four sections by brick fire walls which extend through the roof. The four sections are called "houses," with the numbering system starting at the south with House Number 1.

lnterior floor space is presently open and uninterrupted with the exception of a brick-walled boiler enclosure in House Number 2; the enclosure of a small amount of office space on the third floor, southwest corner of House Number 1; and, the enclosure of a maintenance office on the first floor of House Number 4.

Condition of the Building

The principal structural elements of the building, i.e., masonry, columns, girders, joists and piles, are either in sound condition or can be repaired so that the entire structure will safely support all residential and commercial loads. However, extensive amounts of repair have to be made to the following areas to make the structure and building envelope serviceable:

1. Masonry walls, in good to fair condition, have localized cracks by varying thicknesses due to tensile and compressive stresses caused by yearly temperature fluctuations.

2. Concrete foundation walls are in good to poor condition, and are considerably eroded on the west and south sides, having spalled due to the erosion of adjacent protective soil cover.

3. Wood columns, in a few instances, have either termite damage, or are extensive checked (due to the movement of cargo through the building and/or dry rot or weathering).

4. Approximately 18% of the floor decking has to be replaced, due to damage caused by roof leaks and fire.

5. Most of the framing members in House Number 1, where decking is fire-damaged, have had their strength reduced by approximately 15%.

6. The roof is unserviceable and leaks badly, particularly in House Number 1. Almost half (45%) of the roof deck is rotted or deteriorated.

7. The wharf on the west and south sides of the warehouse, which provides both public access around the buiding while serving as part of the earth retention system for the building's foundations, is in poor condition although it was rebuilt in 1942. The entire plank deck needs replacement, the wood sheeting which serves as an earth retention system for the building's foundation has to be replaced in some areas, and some piles must be replaced above the water line.

8. The bulkhead structure around the fastland pier is in poor to fair condition (fair on the south and east sides, poor on the west side).

9. The finger pier (the metal structure projecting southwards into the harbor and built in 1910) is in poor condition and beyond economical repair.